

A Forum on Disaster Preparedness of Individuals with a Disability and their Health Conditions in the Rio Grande Valley

SOCI 3348 Disaster and Society
May 7, 2019

Service Learning Designation

- In this Spring semester, students in SOCI 3348 Disaster and Society class conducted a study on disaster preparedness, risk perception, and health conditions of individuals who live with a disability in the Rio Grande Valley.
- The study is a part of service-learning component designated in the course. They would like to share their study's findings with key stakeholders who are concerned with disaster and emergency management in the valley.
- The study's findings are expected to be useful input for the key stakeholders to help individuals with a disability condition for a future disaster event.
- This forum showcases a meaningful engagement between the University and the community partners in preparing for future disasters in efforts to build disaster resiliency in the valley.

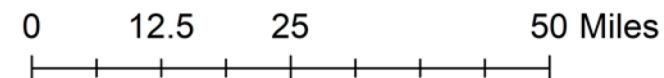
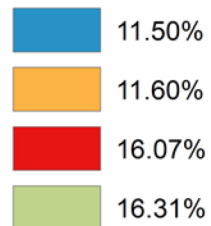
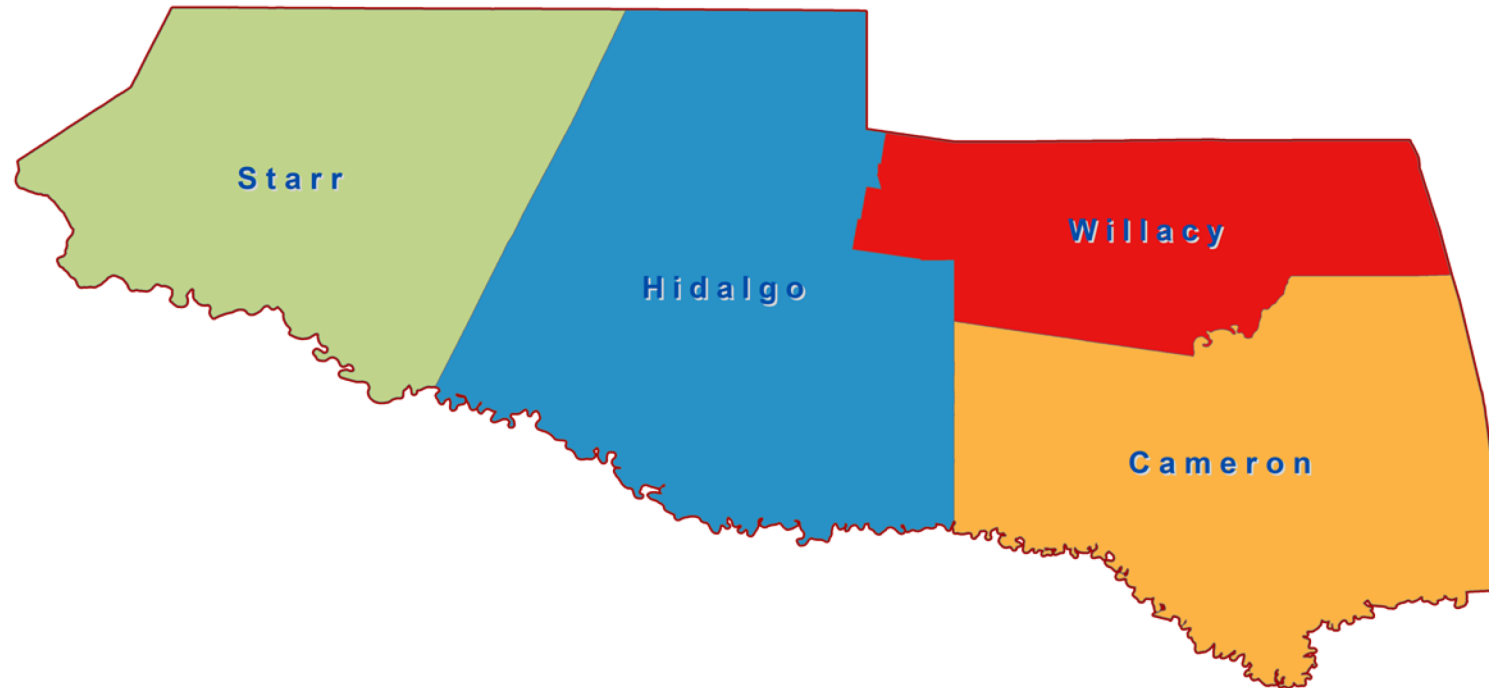
Overview of Population with a Disability

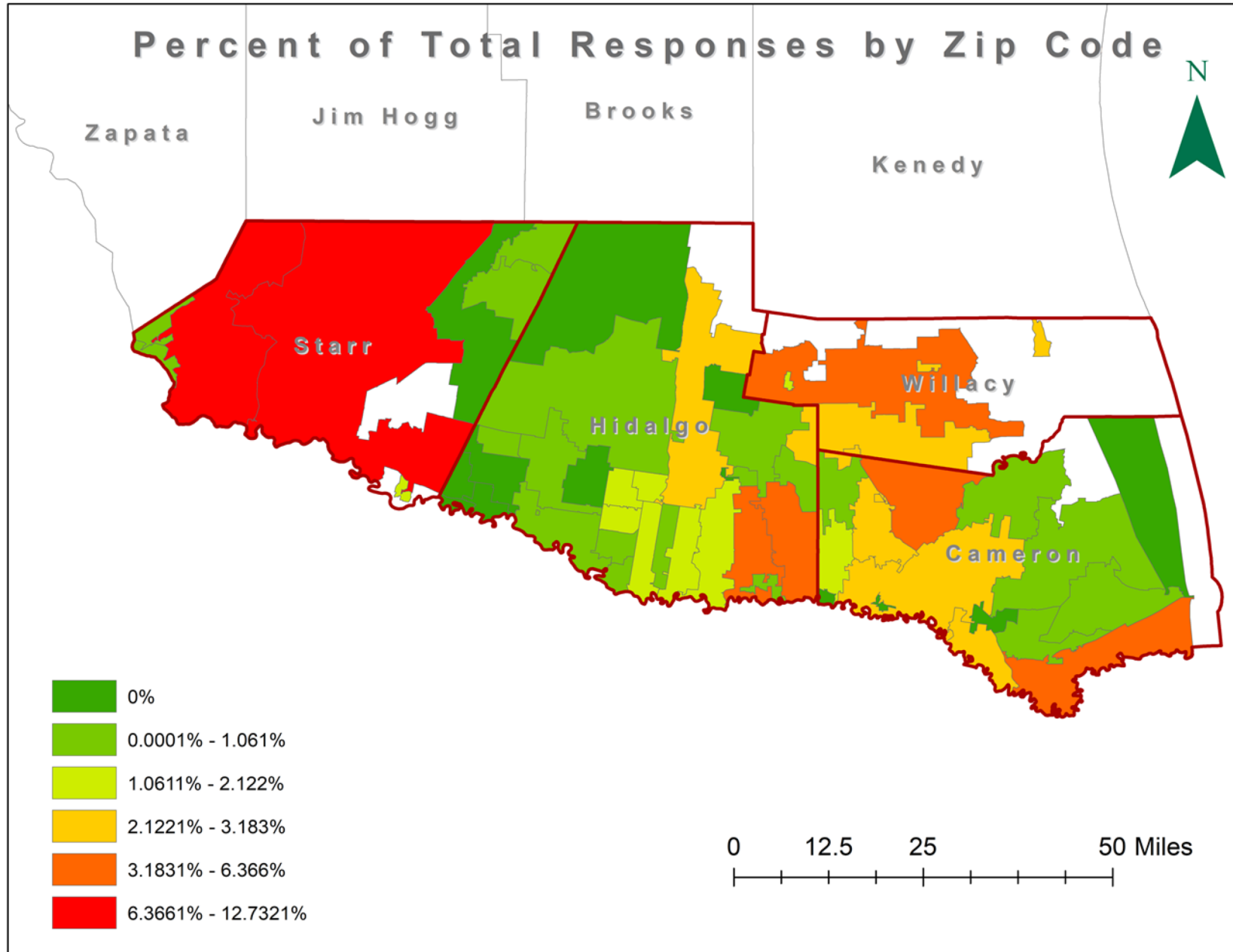
County	Total Population	Disabled Population	Percent Total	Total Population (18 or older)	Percent Total (18 or older)
Cameron County, Texas	415,215	55,382	13.34	48,196	11.61
Hidalgo County, Texas	811,347	109,136	13.45	93,343	11.50
Starr County, Texas	62,096	11,460	18.46	10,132	16.32
Willacy County, Texas	19,512	3,507	17.97	3,137	16.08
Rio Grande Valley	1,308,170	179,485	13.72	154,808	11.83

New Professionals for New Challenges

- Study was approved by Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Online survey instrument
- Convenience Sampling
- 377 respondents
- 95% confidence, Margin of error (5%), Population size (154,808)= sample size 387

Percent of individuals with a disability who are aged 18 and over in the Rio Grande Valley





		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	174	46.28
	Male	197	52.39
	Other	5	1.33
Age	18-25	56	14.85
	26-35	46	12.2
	36-45	53	14.06
	46-60	98	25.99
	>60	124	32.89
Race	White	262	74.43
	Black or African American	7	1.99
	American Indian or Alaska Native	2	0.57
	Something Else (Specify)	81	23.01
Children	Yes	105	27.93
	No	253	67.29
	Rather not say	18	4.79
Education	Some High School (No Diploma)	83	22.43
	High School Graduate or GED	110	29.73
	Some College but No Degree	78	21.08
	Associate's Degree	47	12.7
	Bachelor's Degree	42	11.35
	Master's Degree	9	2.43
	Doctorate's Degree	1	0.27
Income	Less than \$25,000	146	38.83
	\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	87	23.14
	\$50,000 to less than \$75,000	37	9.84
	\$75,000 or more	8	2.13
	Don't know/Would rather not say	98	26.06
Health Insurance	Yes	292	77.66
	No	52	13.83
	Don't know/Would rather not say	32	8.51
	Total	376	100

Thank you!!

Disaster Studies MA Program

Disaster Preparedness of Individuals with Disabilities and their Health Conditions in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas

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I. Research Questions

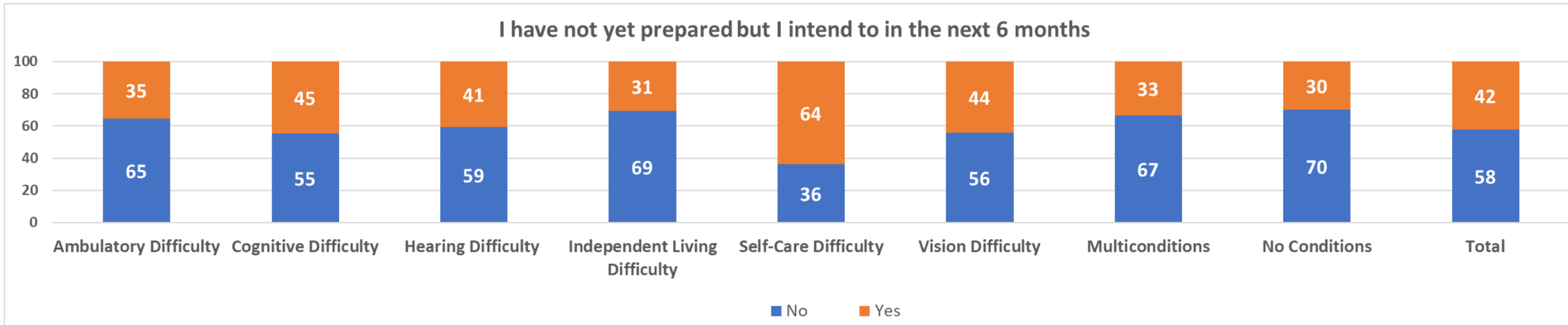
1. I have not yet prepared but I intent to in the next 6 months.
2. I have not yet prepared but I intent to in the next month.
3. I just recently began preparing.
4. I have been prepared for at least the past 6 months.
5. I am not planning to do anything about preparing.

I. Research Questions (continued)

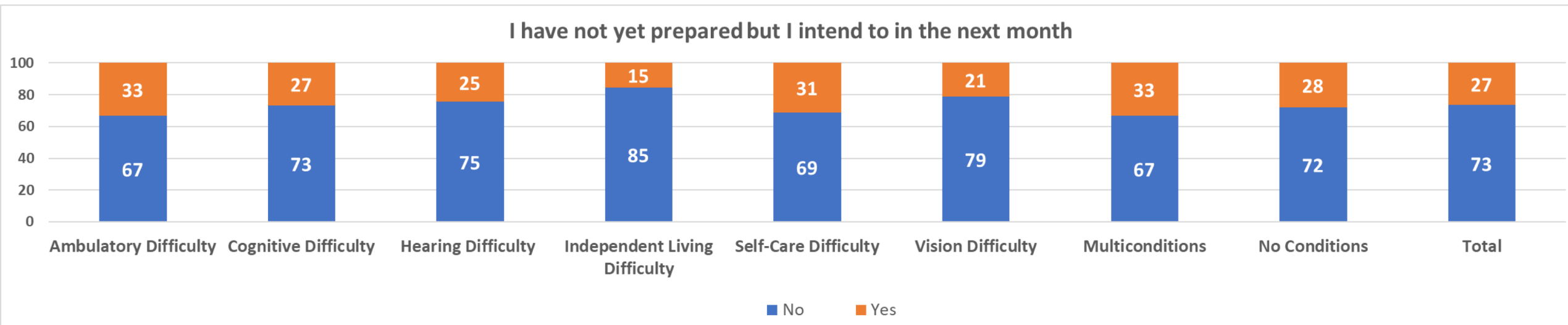
If you have a disability or a health condition to prepare for an emergency situation, please specify...

- Hearing Difficulty
- Vision Difficulty
- Cognitive Difficulty
- Ambulatory Difficulty
- Self-Care Difficulty
- Independent Living Difficulty
- Multiconditions (2 or more conditions)
- No condition

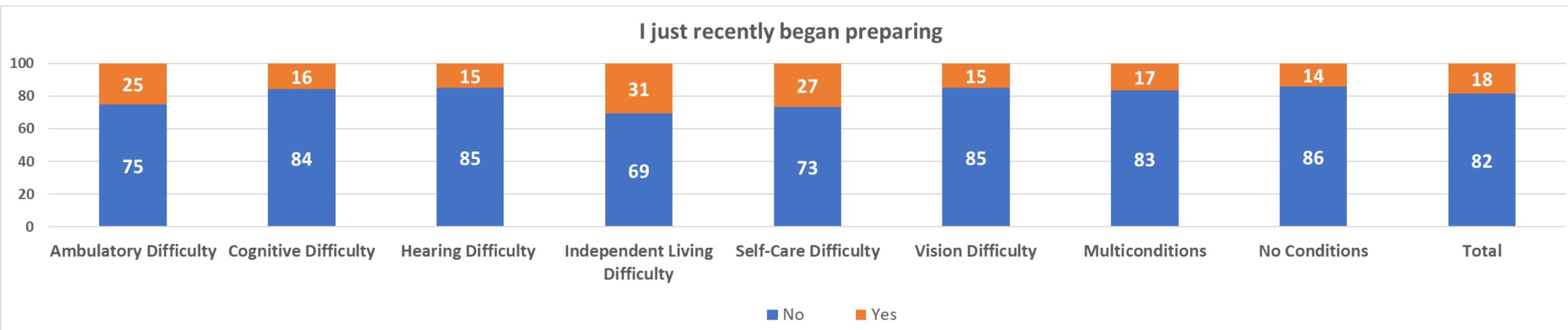
II. Findings



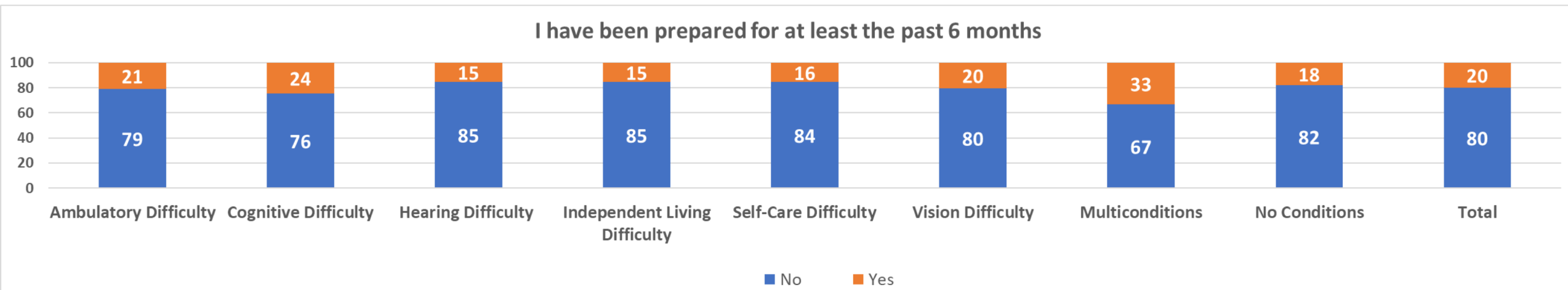
II. Findings (continued)



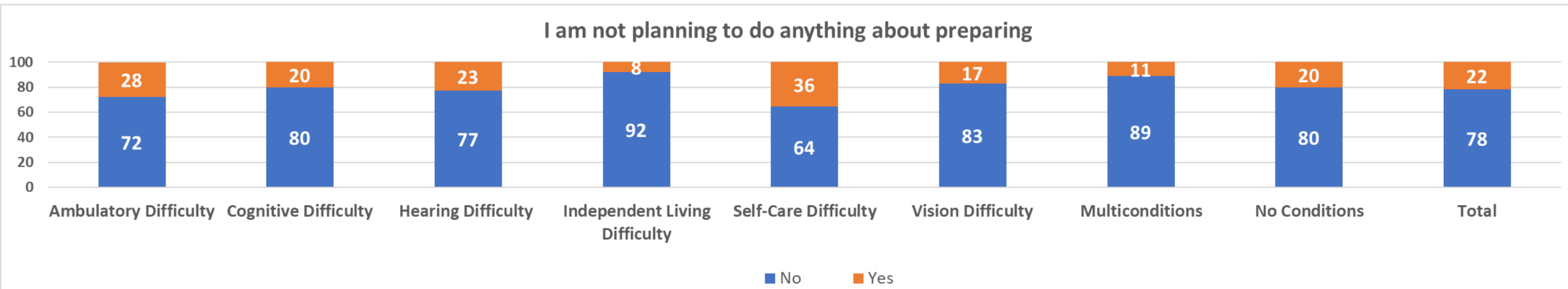
II. Findings (continued)



II. Findings (continued)



II. Findings (continued)



II. Findings (continued)



III. Recommendations

The study's findings indicated that the state of disaster preparedness was very low.

This could be implied that the local authorities must work on improving the disaster preparedness of the individuals with a disability.

III. Recommendations (continued)

Caring the vulnerable individuals who are disabled in this valley could lead to building disaster resiliency.

In conclusion, the local authorities must act to promote disaster preparedness among the individuals with health conditions.

Understanding Disaster Preparedness of Individuals with Disabilities and their Health Condition in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas

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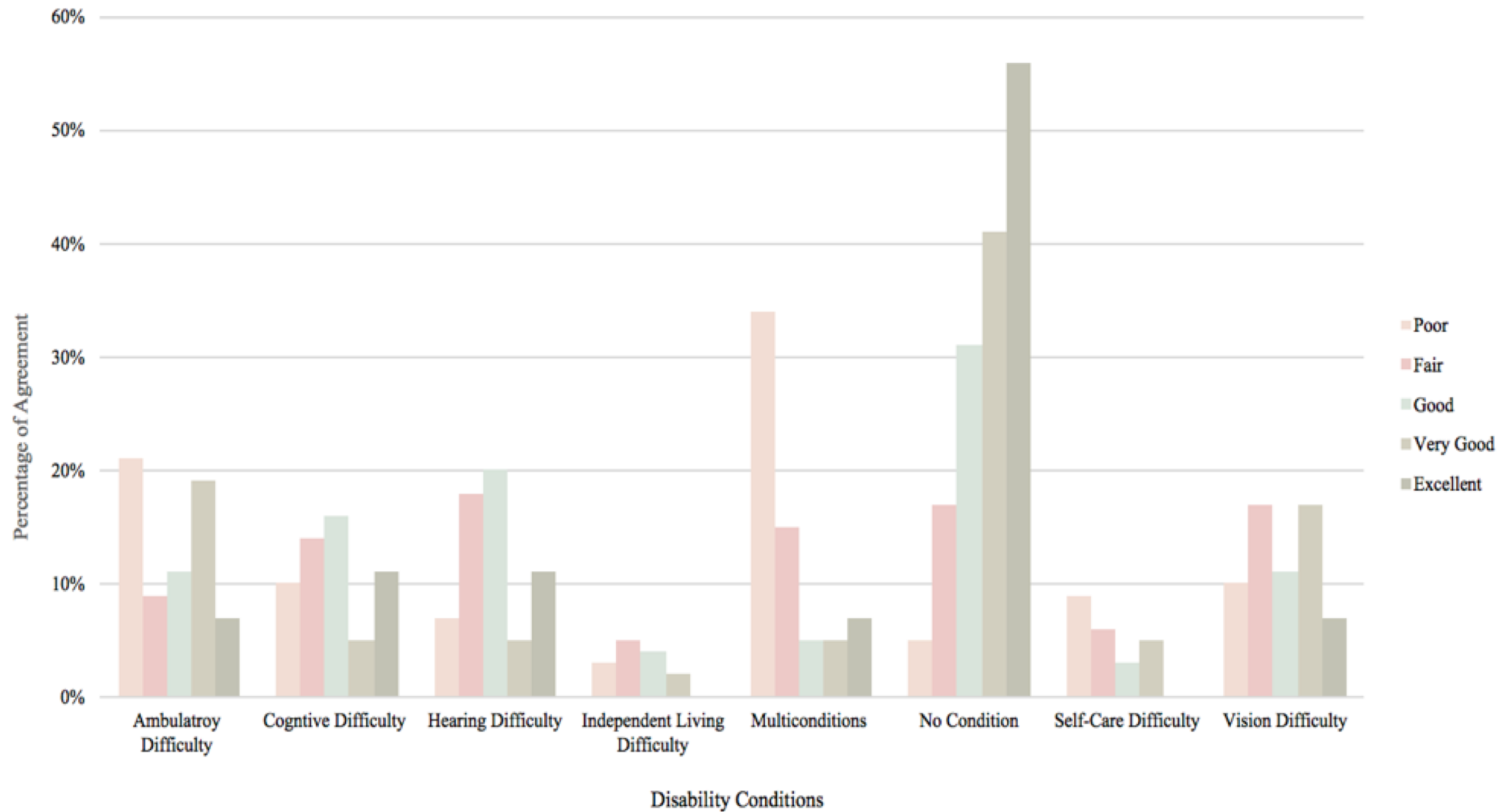
The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

I. Research Questions

- In thinking about preparing yourself for a major disaster, which best represents your preparedness? I have been prepared for at least the past 6 months: Yes, No
- Please indicate your health condition: Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent
- If you have a disability or a health condition to prepare for an emergency situation, please specify.: Hearing Difficulty; Vision Difficulty; Cognitive Difficulty; Ambulatory Difficulty; Self-Care Difficulty; Independent Living Difficulty
- Do you have a disability or a health condition that might affect your capacity to respond to an emergency situation? Yes, No, Would not Say

II. Findings

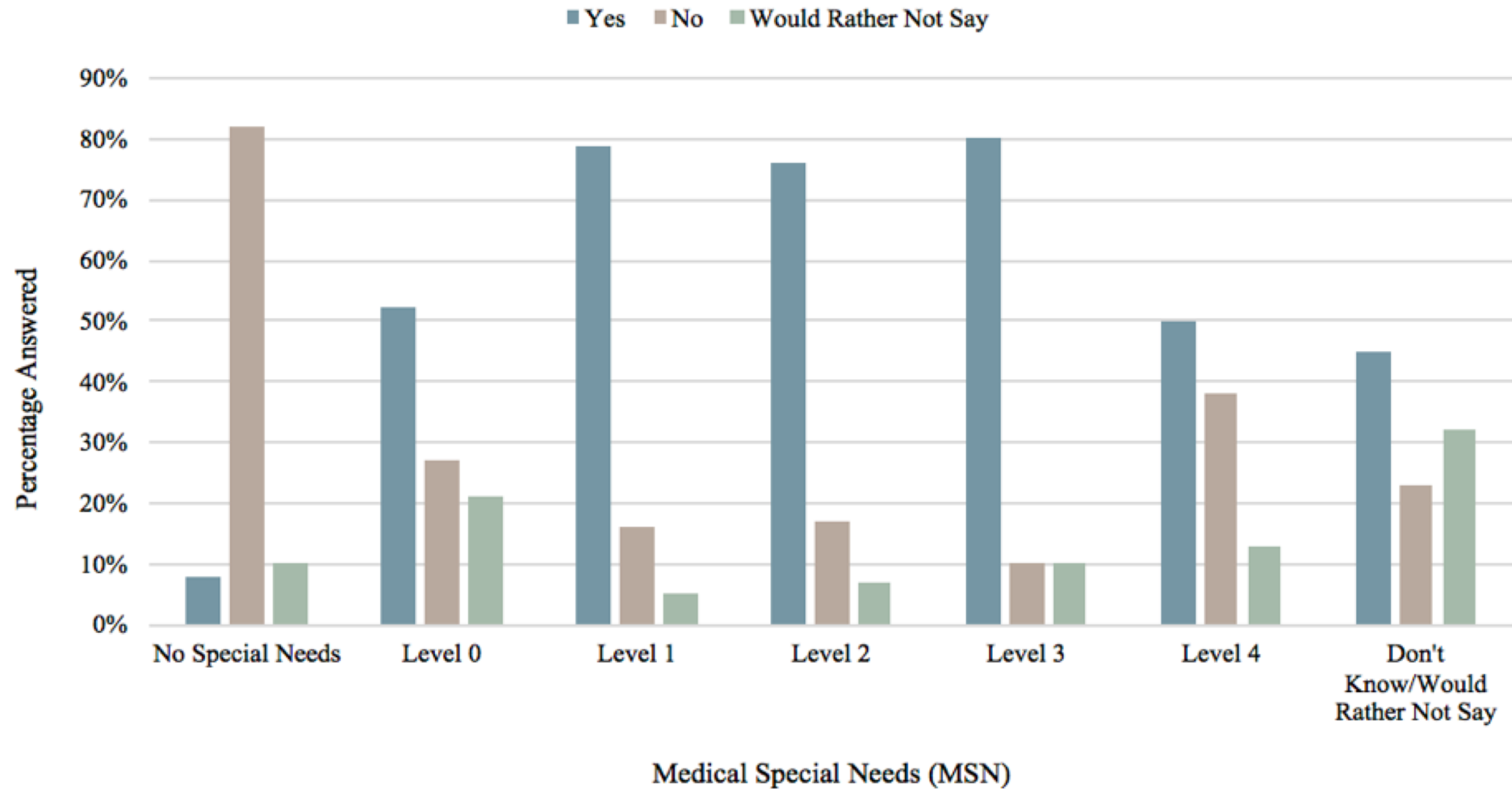
Self-Report: Health Condition Status



MSN Levels

- No special needs: no medical needs and no required assistance
- Level 0: no medical needs, but require transportation assistance for evacuation
- Level 1: dependent on others for routine care (eating, walking, toileting, etc.) and children under 18 without adult supervision
- Level 2: physical or developmental disabilities, such as blindness, significant hearing impairment, amputation, deafness, and mental retardation
- Level 3: require assistance with medical care administration, monitoring by nurse, dependent on equipment, assistance with medications, and mental health disorders
- Level 4: persons outside an institutional facility care setting, who require extensive medical oversight (i.e., IV, chemotherapy, life support equipment, morbidly obese)
- Don't know/Would rather not say

Do you have a disability or a health condition that might affect your capacity to respond to an emergency situation?



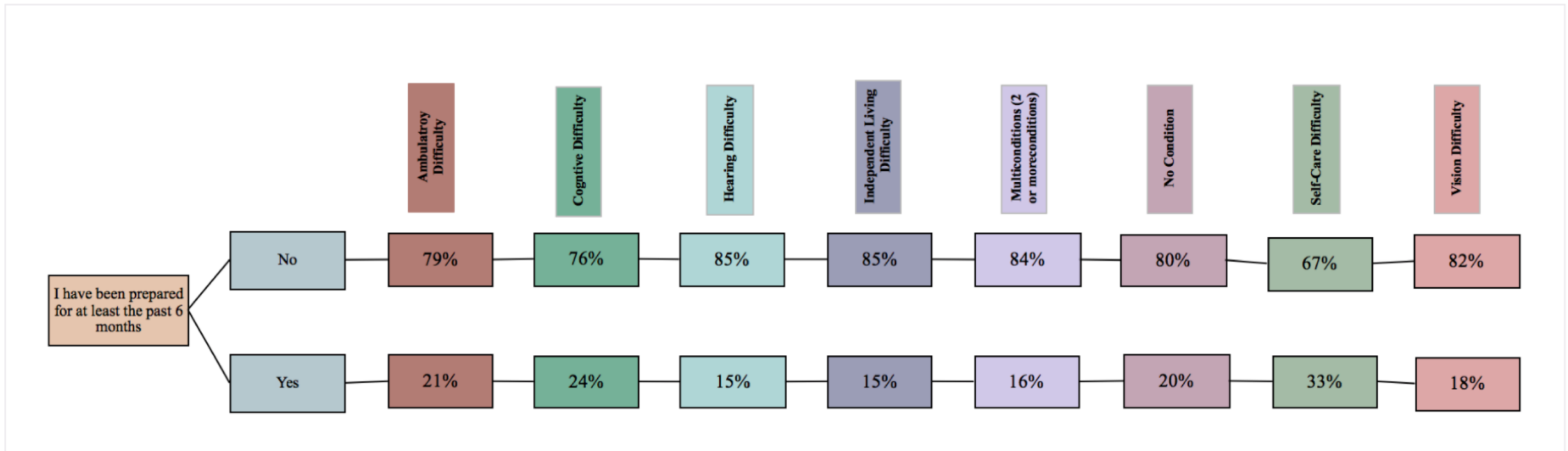


Figure 5. This graph depicts the percentage answered based on the respondents' disability condition on whether which statement best reflects their preparedness when thinking about preparing for a major disaster.

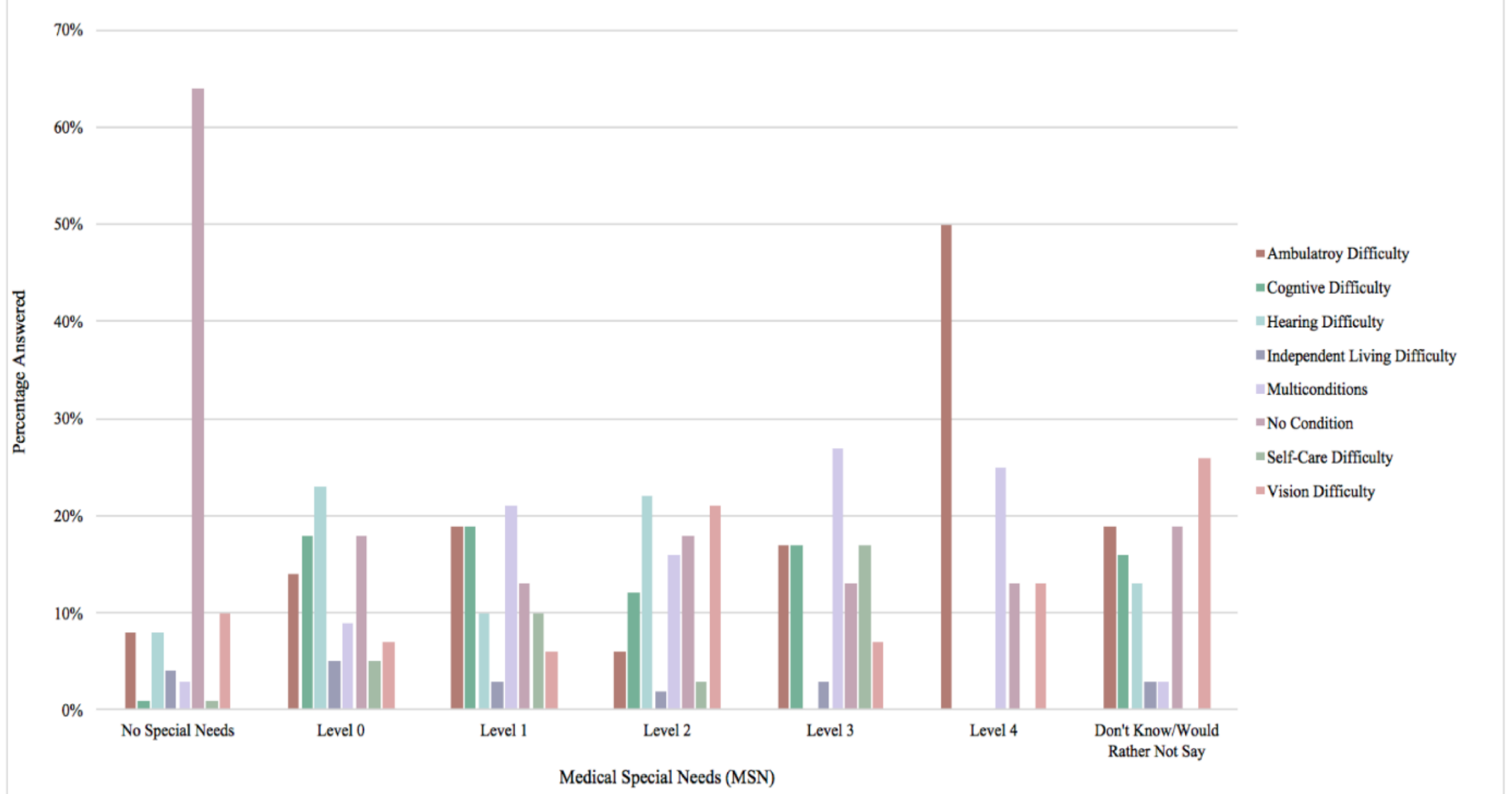


Figure 6. A summary of individuals reporting their level of Medical Specials Needs (MSN) based on their disability condition.

III. Recommendations

- We found that one of the main obstacles within this population was they are not adequately prepared in the past six months for a disaster event.
- This may be due to a number of possible reasons:
 - Financial difficulties
 - Lack of access to disaster preparedness information
 - Unaware of available resources in their communities.

III. Recommendations (continued)

- Possible intervention strategies include:
 - Programs that assist in advocating for and facilitating effective strategies
 - Drills/scenario training for members of the community living with a disability.
 - Application for federal grant focused specifically on disabled populations that could be implemented to cover expenses and needs in the event a disaster is expected.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR TIME**

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley™

Enhancing Disaster Preparedness of Individuals with Disabilities in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas

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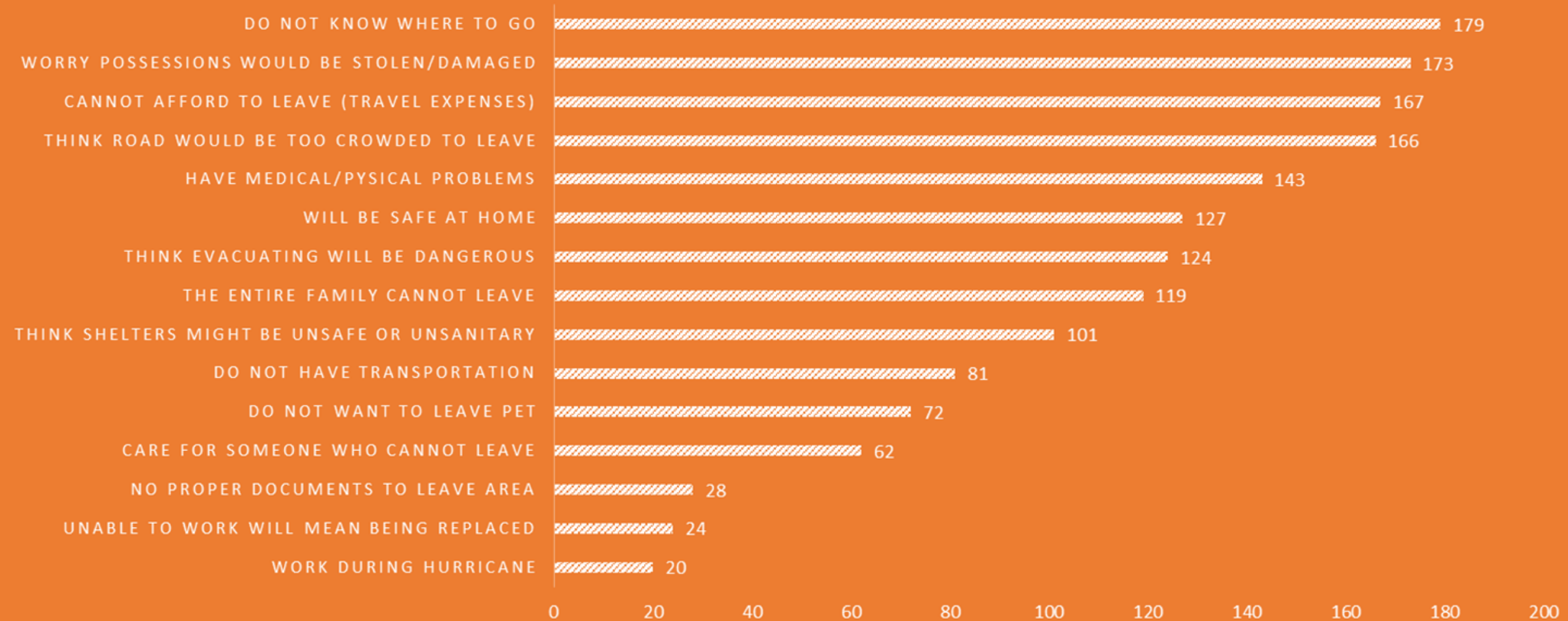
The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

I. Research Questions

- What are the reasons that disabled individuals are not able and/or willing to evacuate before a disaster?
- Among respondents, which are the most prevalent health conditions affecting evacuation?
- What can be done to enable disabled individuals to evacuate and/or effectively prepare for a disaster?

II. Findings

REASONS FOR NOT WANTING TO EVACUATE



No.	Reasons	Ambulatory Difficulty	Cognitive Difficult	Hearing Difficulty	Independent Livin Difficulty	Multiconditions	No Conditions	Self-Care Difficulty	Vision Difficulty	Total
1	Do not know where to go	16	31	28	5	21	45	7	26	179
2	Worry possessions stolen/damaged	17	18	30	5	18	51	7	27	173
3	Cannot afford to leave (travel expenses)	23	19	21	5	27	42	8	22	167
4	Think road would be too crowded to leave	20	23	26	3	18	47	6	23	166
5	Have medical/physical problems	19	20	21	2	24	25	9	23	143
6	Will be safe at home	13	10	17	5	18	37	9	18	127
7	Think evacuating will be dangerous	12	11	19	6	18	34	6	18	124
8	The entire family cannot leave	14	12	14	2	21	34	5	17	119
9	Think shelters might be unsafe or unsanitary	6	14	14	1	10	27	6	23	101
10	Do not want to leave pet	8	5	5	3	14	19	4	14	72
11	Care for someone who cannot leave	4	7	8	3	10	16	2	12	62
12	No proper documents to leave area	4	3	1	2	6	6	4	2	28
13	Unable to work will mean being replaced	2	1	1		2	12	1	5	24
14	Work during hurricane		3	3			8	3	3	20
15	Do not have transportation	14	10	10	2	16	13	4	12	8
		172	187	218	44	223	416	81	245	

III. Recommendations

If there is a mandatory evacuation during a disaster event, the authorities must consider how to evacuate the disabled.

To resolve the most prevalent reasons for the disabled population's hesitation to evacuate, we recommend the following:

- Build handicap accessible shelters and host events for the disabled population.
- Mail maps of routes to safe, handicap accessible shelters. Also on this pamphlet, should be information on registering for transportation services, if necessary.
- Inform disabled individuals that material things are replaceable. Personal safety is of greater importance.
- Encourage them to have an emergency savings account.
- Disabled population should evacuate early to avoid inevitable congestion of roadways.



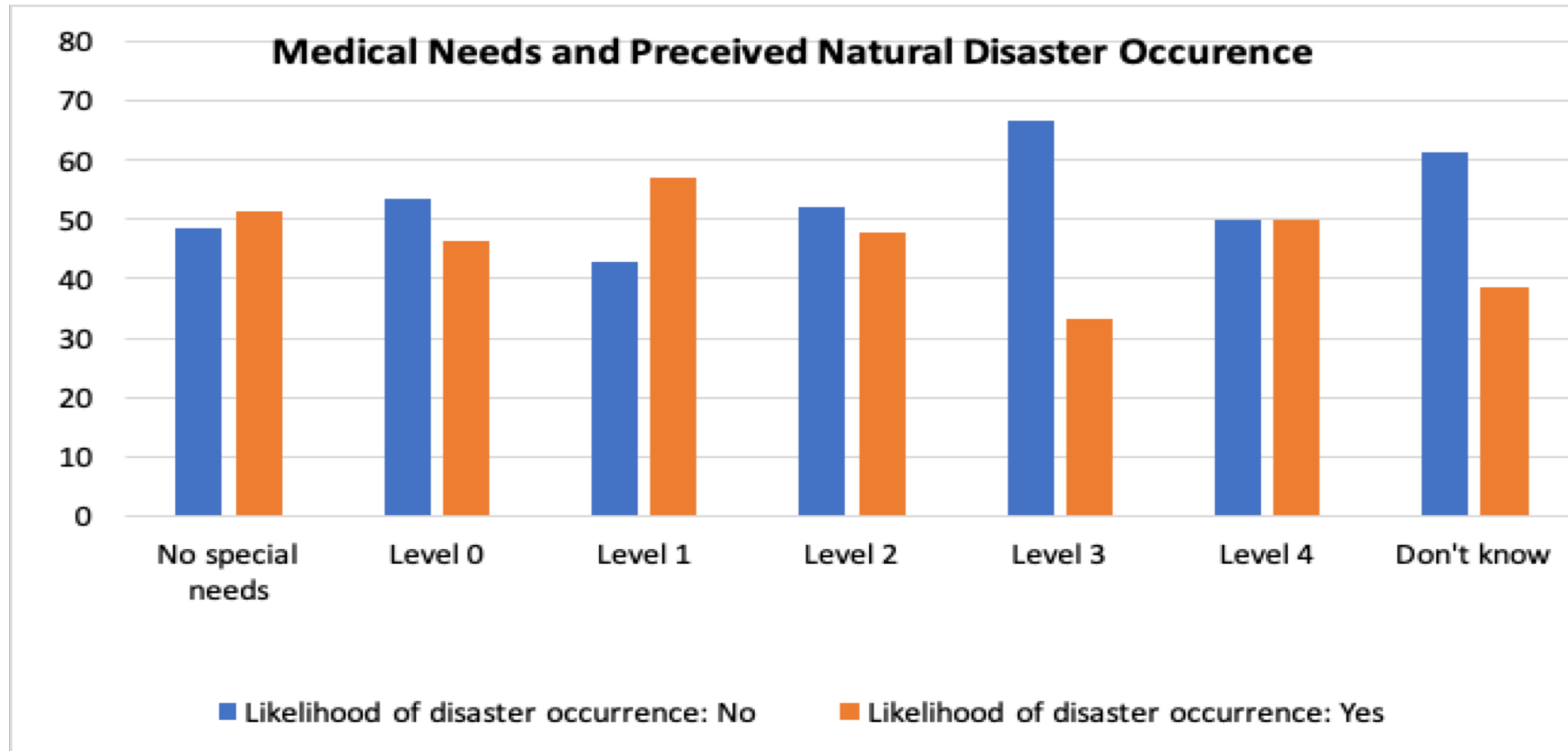
Perceived Risk and Disaster Preparedness of the Disabled Individuals in the Rio Grande Valley



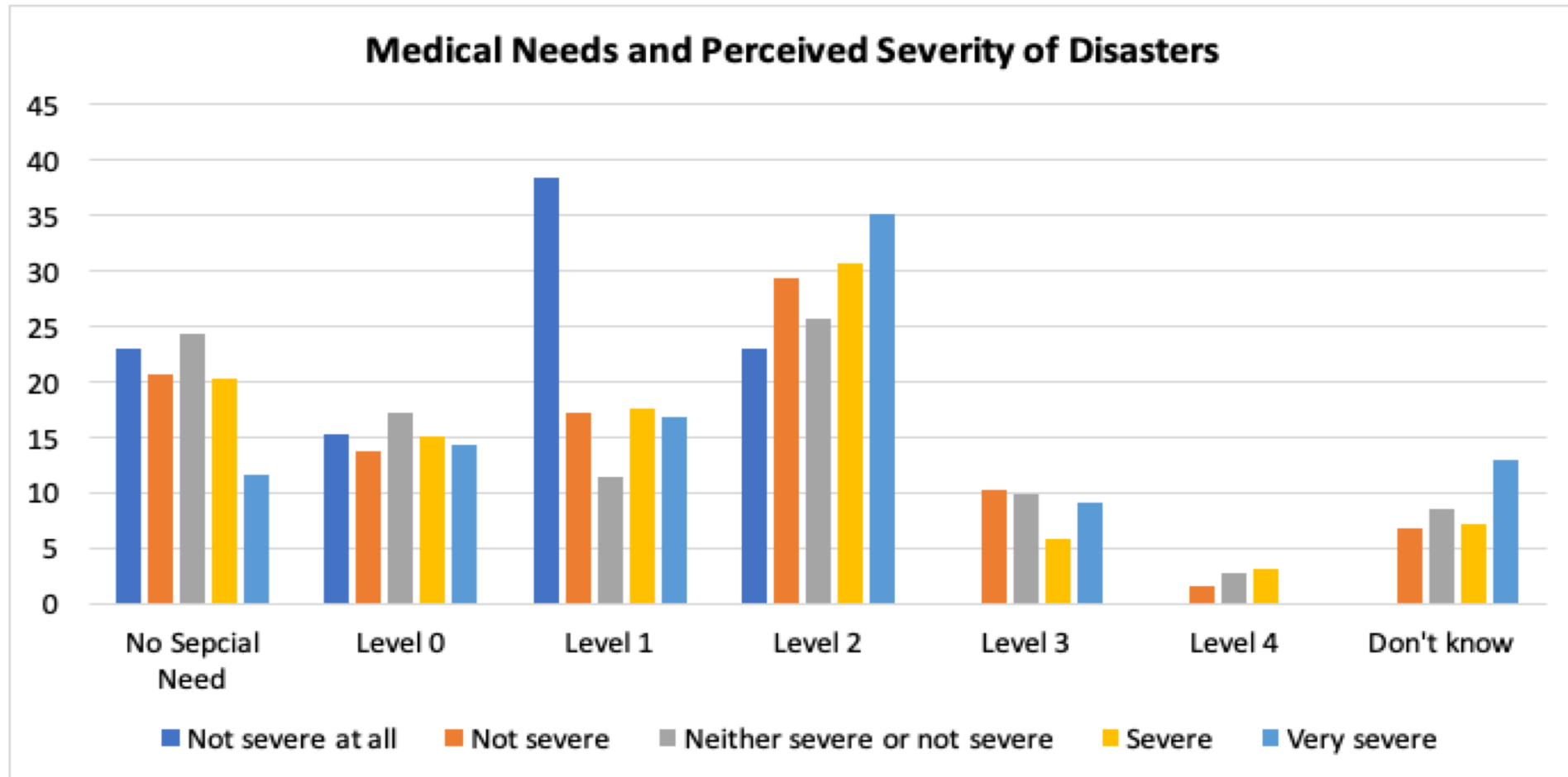
Naomi Cortez, Adalberto Medina, Alexis Pruneda, Dulce Moreno, Thais Cantu,
Ithalia Garza, Lucero Rodea



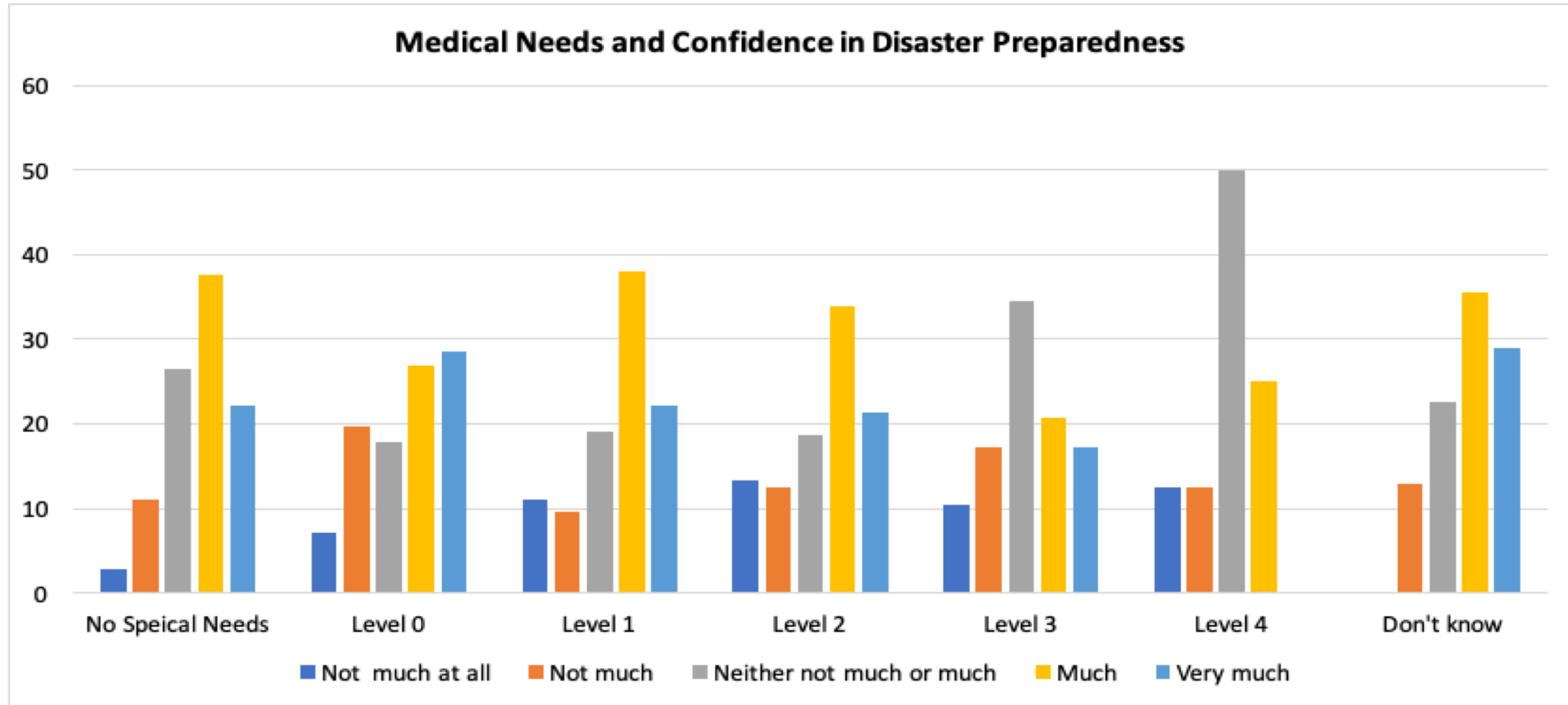
I. Findings



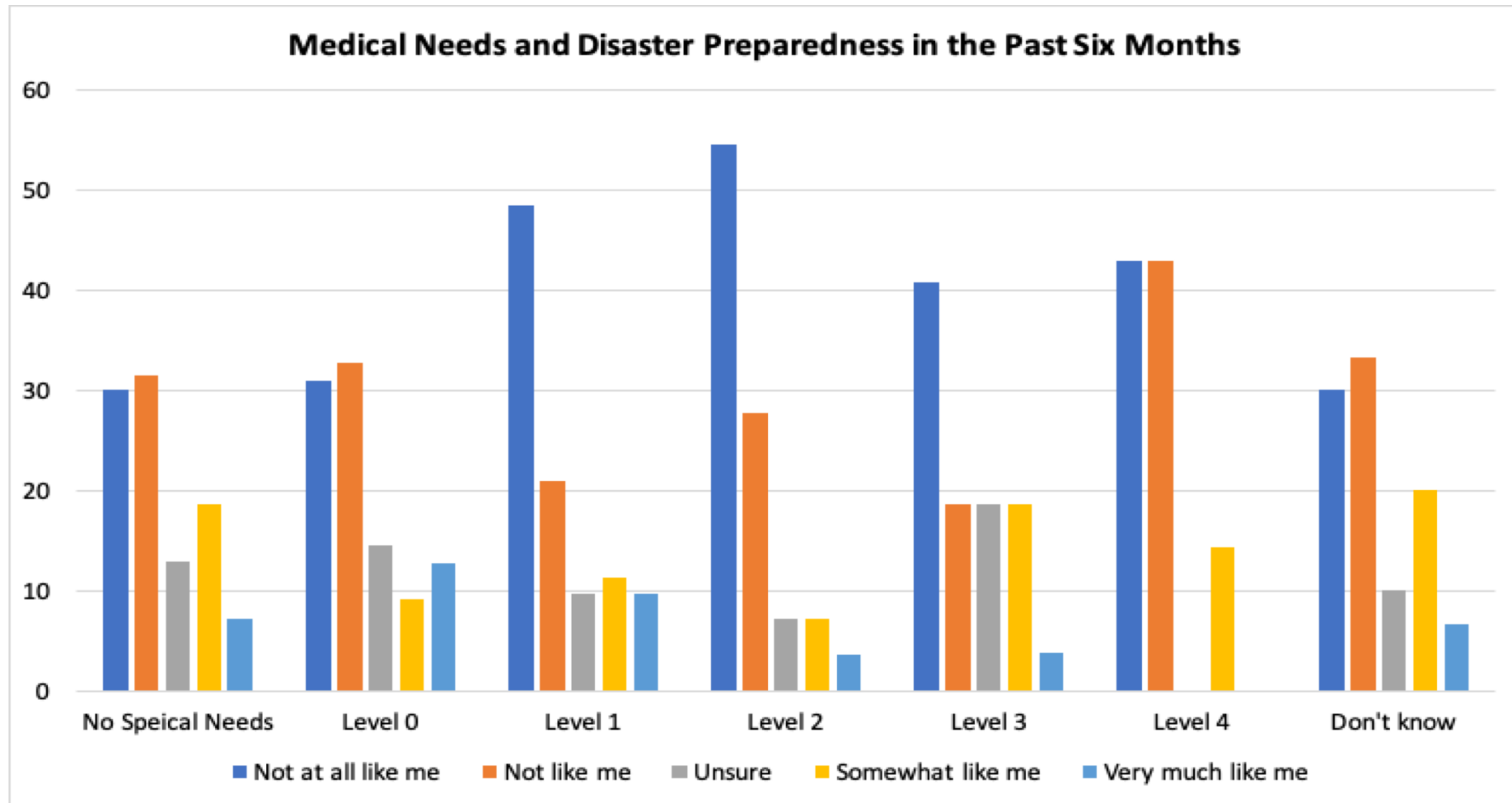
II. Findings



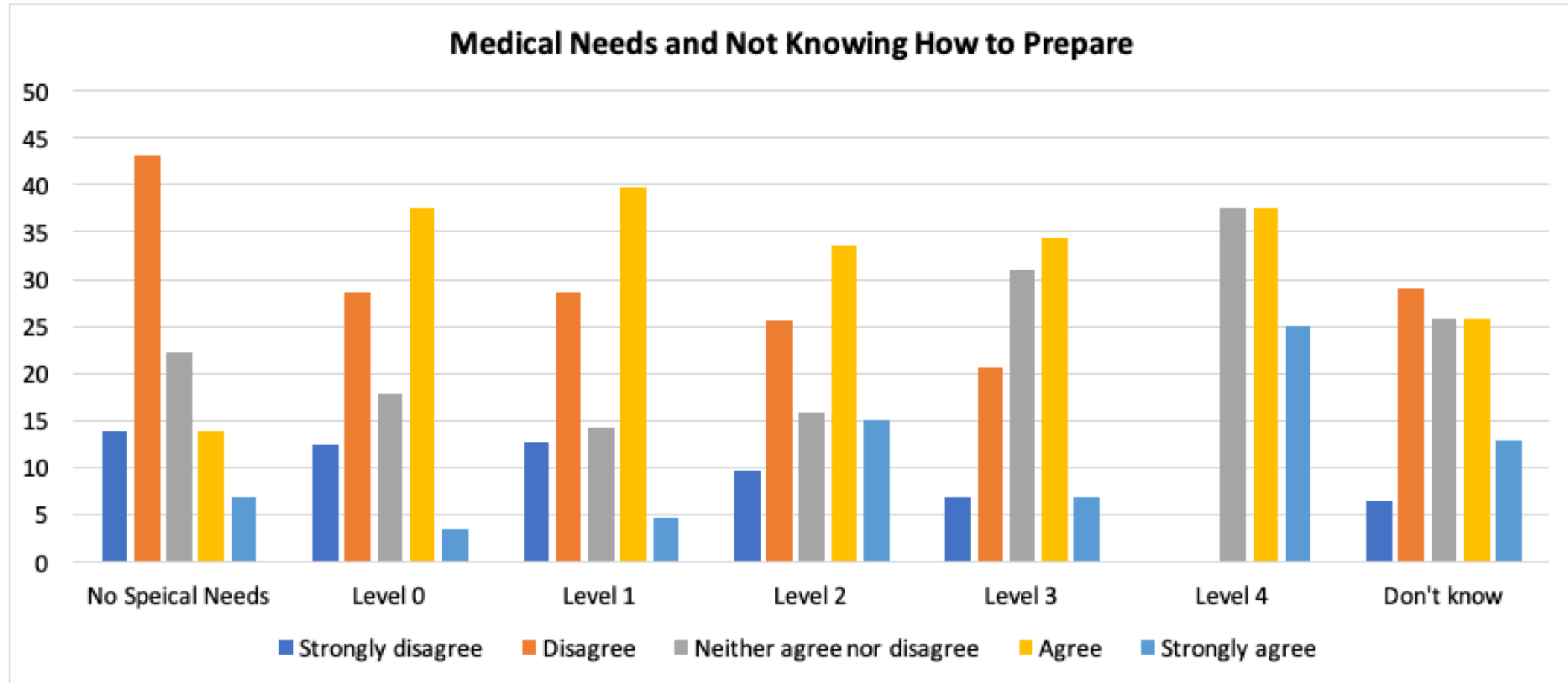
III. Findings



IV. Findings



V. Findings



Results

According to our results, the highest responses were “no” in all counties. It would seem those with disabilities do not want to further expand their knowledge or worry about disasters in their counties. In addition, it would seem that because of this mindset, individuals do not believe that there is a possibility of a severe disaster occurring, and they will not be affected by it.

I. Recommendations

Some things offered to provide to the community in hopes of elevating the number of people prepared for a disaster.

- Providing education on the disasters our county is more prone to
- Providing training on what to do when a disaster hits
- These trainings should be offered to everyone but also focused on vulnerable populations including low income uninsured individuals.

II. Recommendations

- A lot of the answers from the surveys were inclined towards the people not believing anything dangerous would ever happen in their area.
- There they should be told of all the safety zones available to the public. And given phone numbers of places that can assist them incase they lose their homes or get lost.
- It would be best that after the trainings, that there should be monthly follow ups on how the weather has been changing and to ask and make sure everyone is disaster ready.